

states ; that all beyond this is inference ; more or less correct, but still only inference ; and that here the possibility of error is found. It is not the purpose of this paper to argue the point, but to show how useless all controversy about knowing and believing must be till the disputants have agreed about their base. It is clear, however, that if we can know only our own mental states, we cannot *know* God, though our rational conviction as to His existence may be almost as certain as knowledge. It may be as certain as our conviction that there is an external world, for neither do we know that ; and we may be convinced of His existence by the same reasoning that convinces us of the existence of our brother man.

Closely allied to knowledge is the fashionable, but foolish, word

AGNOSTICISM.

One would think there could not be much difference of opinion about the definition of this term ; for if *γνῶσις* be knowledge, then *ἀγνοῖα* must be ignorance. If this meaning be allowed, the term becomes utterly useless, as every one is at the same time gnostic and agnostic. Professor Huxley, however, who introduced the title in its modern sense, defines it as the rigorous application of a single principle, "Try all things ; hold fast by that which is good." But this is not a correct definition, because it is also the very essence of Christianity, and indeed of honesty in every department of thought. The definition is inadequate because the subject defined and the predicate defining are not of the same extension.

If, however, as we are told, the word agnostic was invented as an antithesis to the gnostic of Church history, "agnosticism" ought to be antithetic to gnosticism. But so far is this from being the case that they agree in many important points. Gnosticism and agnosticism both allegorise away in part, or in whole, the great facts of Christ's work and person. They both represent experimental Christianity as knowledge rather than faith, and make knowledge the standard of the moral condition. We may, therefore, well say to them, "Sirs, ye are brethren."

The Professor tells us that agnostics "do not pre-